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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 000437

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: KUWAIT-IRAN: NEXT STEPS ON BORDER ISSUES

REF: KUWAIT 432

Classified By: Political Counselor Peter O'Donohue for reasons 1.4 b and d

¶1. (C) Summary. In the course of an April 28 meeting to discuss Kosovo with French, German, Italian, UK and U.S. representatives (reftel), MFA U/S Khaled Jarallah turned to the subject of Kuwait's evolving relationship with Iraq. Acknowledging that the border remained an acutely sore point in the bilateral relationship, he noted with optimism that an Iraqi MFA delegation had just arrived in Kuwait and would meet with GOK counterparts the following day to discuss the issue in operational detail. End summary.

¶2. (C) Specifically, Jarallah said he expected the Iraqi delegation to bring specific proposals for building the "50-60" homes on the Iraqi side of the border to house Iraqi farmers currently squatting on what is clearly Kuwaiti land. He reviewed the background of the issue, citing UNSCR 833 as an "irrevocable" basis for adherence to the border as defined by the UN boundary pillars, and expressing Kuwait's desire to implement a mutual plan to resolve "this continuous Iraqi violation of the border that has been ongoing for several years."

¶3. (C) Jarallah stated that the two countries had long ago reached agreement in principle that (a) Iraqi cultivation on the Kuwaiti side, along with the cultivators, would be removed, (b) both countries would cooperate with the UN to restore and maintain the boundary pillars and (c) Kuwait would bear all costs associated with "resettling" the Iraqi farmers at a location to be specified on the Iraqi side. Jarallah expressed positive expectation that, after several years of inaction by the Iraqis, the impending talks would lay out the details of a solution, including a timetable. He added that the two sides would also begin discussion of the location and specifications of a border/customs complex to be located on the Iraqi side near the Abdaly/Safwan crossing point.

¶4. (C) Comment: While the number cited by Jarallah "50-60 houses" appears inflated, the story of the Iraq-Kuwait bilateral agreement in principle is one Embassy Kuwait has heard many times over the past few years. Any progress achieved between the two countries in these expert-level talks will mark a significant shift in a long-stalled status quo. End comment.

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